



A program of works by

LUCIANO BERIO

PIERRE JALBERT

RICHARD LAVENDA

ALLEN MOLINEUX

and

BERNARD RANDS

Thursday, October 7, 2010

8:00 p.m.

Lillian H. Duncan Recital Hall

Celebrating 1975-2010
35 Years

THE SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC RICE UNIVERSITY

PROGRAM

Blast! (1991)

Richard Lavenda

for double brass quintet and percussion

(b. 1955)

Left Choir

Patrick Corvington, trumpet

Aaron Ritter, trumpet

Nicholas Wolny, horn

Kurt Ferguson, trombone

Austin Howle, tuba

Thomas Dobbs, percussion

Right Choir

Alexander Fioto, trumpet

Douglas Surber, trumpet

John Dodge, horn

Travis Shaeffer, trombone

Michael Woods, tuba

Robert Garza, percussion

Maria Speziale, conductor

Encounter for Brass Quintet (1972)

Allen Molineux

(b. 1951)

Jeffrey Northman, trumpet

Alexander Pride, trumpet

Katharine Caliendo, horn

Berk Schneider, trombone

Joshua Becker, bass trombone

“now again” –

Bernard Rands

fragments from Sappho (2006)

(b. 1934)

Susanne Mentzer, mezzo-soprano

Gina Choi, flute and alto flute

Natalie Parker, clarinet and bass clarinet

Jeffrey Northman, trumpet

Emily Klein, harp

Robert McCullagh, percussion

Ann Marshall, soprano

Rebecca Henderson, alto

Seth Freeman, violin

Allyson Goodman, viola

Clara Yang, cello

Karl Blench, conductor

INTERMISSION

Sequenza IV (1965)
for solo piano

Luciano Berio
(1925-2003)

Brian Connelly, piano

Cello Sonata (2008)

Pierre Jalbert
(b. 1967)

- I. Mysterious, transcendental
- II. Rhythmic, precise
- III. Flexible, soulful – IV. Marcato

The Fischer Duo
Norman Fischer, cello
Jeanne Kierman, piano

PROGRAM NOTES

Blast! Richard Lavenda

Blast! was written in 1991 to commemorate the opening of Stude Concert Hall. Stude's architecture had a major influence in the construction of the piece: the two equally matched antiphonal brass quintets, each augmented by a percussionist playing a variety of instruments, were to face each other in the balconies above the stage, in sort of a modern version of the Gabrieli canzoni written for St. Mark's in Venice. In other venues, such as Duncan Recital Hall tonight, they simply stand in a V formation. The two groups imitate each other, finish each other's phrases, sometimes interrupt each other, and eventually exchange parts. While the title might suggest a rather loud, obvious piece, not all of it is at high volume, and, one hopes, it is not without some subtlety.

I wrote *Blast!* for the Shepherd School Brass Ensemble and its then conductor, David Waters. We scheduled this performance months ago, and by a sad coincidence, it falls just a few short days after his untimely death. The performers and their current conductor, Marie Speziale, join me in offering this performance in his memory.

– Note by the composer

Richard Lavenda is Professor of Music Theory and Composition,
Chair of the Music Theory and Composition Department, and
Director of Graduate Studies at The Shepherd School of Music.

Encounter for Brass Quintet Allen Molineux

Encounter for Brass Quintet was written in the fall of 1972 and premiered in March 1973 at the Eastman School of Music. Allen Molineux attended DePauw University, where he studied with Donald H. White and was awarded a Bachelor of Music degree in composition.

The unorthodox contour of Molineux's composition is incredibly continuous, making it difficult to determine the beginning and termination of each tightly woven phrase. There are, however, specific sections of clear horizontal and vertical transformation effectuated by light rhythmic and melodic variation. The melodic and harmonic textures of the entire piece are framed around the opening chord (minor second and augmented fourth), while the meter is a continuum of eighth and sixteenth notes manipulated through sets of meter changes (primarily duple and triple meters in counterpoint and obscure syncopation). Molineux's polyphonic soundscape is one of romantic expressionism and reckless abandonment.

— Note by Berk Schneider

Allen Molineux is Professor of Music and Chair of the Music Department at Claflin University in South Carolina.

"now again"—fragments from Sappho Bernard Rands

"now again"—fragments from Sappho, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation for the Network for New Music, was completed in September 2006. As the title states, the texts are from the extant fragments of Sappho's poetry. Only one complete poem exists and the remainder range from tiny, disconnected phrases to single words and parts of words. A large amount of conjecture is therefore necessary in order to discern (imagine) the poet's precise meanings and intent. In this context, the composer felt free to assemble fragments at will creating a "libretto" in which a dialogue between Sappho (as narrator) and other young ladies conveys the poet's love and desire for women. In a "feminine voice, desiring other women" she sings, again and again, of desire and yearning; of "the amorous pleasures women share on soft beds." (Page duBois) Thus a text is created for a Cantata Erotica in which the four vocal sections suggest, in turn, an Invocation; a Convocation; a Consummation; and an Introspection. These are connected by three brief instrumental interludes.

Sappho was a musician who sang or recited her poems, accompanying herself on the lyre and sometimes on a small harp. In fact, she "wrote songs, she wrote for the ear, with all the need for repetition and the quickly recognized phrase that song requires." (Page duBois) With these qualities dominating the fragmentary poems, the composer has responded in a musical idiom somewhat different from that normally associated with his music. Here, the harmonic language is simpler, more direct and the melodic lines (both vocal and instrumental) are essentially conjunct in their movement.

The rhythms of the vocal lines directly reflect the syllabic speech patterns of the poems and melismatic settings are reserved for moments of fantasy. The composer has said "I could not imagine these texts being sung in disjunct vocal lines typical of the sound world of so much post-Second

Viennese school music. Thus, I forced myself to think and hear differently and be transported into other sonic realms.”

The beautiful translations and renderings used in this work are by Paul Roche.

“*now again*” is dedicated to the memory of Serge and Natalie Koussevitzky.

— Note provided by the composer

Bernard Rands is the Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music at Harvard University. Among his many impressive distinctions, he is the winner of the 1984 Pulitzer Prize in Music. He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2004.

Sequenza IV Luciano Berio

Between 1958 and 2002, Luciano Berio wrote fourteen pieces entitled **Sequenza**, along with several versions of the same work for different instruments, revisions of the original pieces and also the parallel **Chemins** series, where one of the **Sequenzas** is used as the basis for a new composition on a larger scale. The **Sequenza** series is one of the most remarkable achievements of the late twentieth century – a collection of virtuoso pieces that explores the capabilities of a solo instrument and its player, making extreme technical demands of the performer while developing the musical vocabulary of the instrument in compositions so assured and so distinctive that each piece both initiates and potentially exhausts the repertoire of a new genre.

Luciano Berio commenced his **Sequenza** series with a work for solo flute in 1958. The monophonic nature of that instrument led the composer to develop a “virtual polyphony” that applied not only to the interaction of melodic layers, but also to the emotional and historical content of a work. Explicit facets of this multi-level approach emerged with greater clarity in later entries from the **Sequenza** series. **Sequenza IV** for solo piano (1965) focuses on harmonic processes that Berio had been developing since his experiences with serialism in the early 1950s. Chords grow or change one pitch at a time while quick, scurrying figures spin off into arpeggios or fragmented melodies. Berio’s use of the sustain pedal allows for a two-tiered chordal writing, with chords sometimes ringing through rapid staccato progressions of different character. The piece is highly virtuosic, characterized by mercurial rhythms and large improvisatory gestures that form structural blocks on both small- and large-scale levels. Silence, used specifically as a textural layer, also permeates the piece. The **Sequenzas** have significantly influenced the development of composition for solo instruments and voice, and there is no comparable series of works in the output of any other composer. Series of pieces tend to be linked by the instruments for which the composer writes, but this is a series in which the pieces are linked instead by the variety of instruments for which Berio composed. **Sequenza IV** was premiered in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1966.

Luciano Berio, an important innovator in electronic as well as conventional music, taught at Tanglewood, Mills College, Harvard University, the Juilliard School, Darmstadt, and Dartington, and ran the electro-acoustic department of IRCAM in Paris.

Cello Sonata Pierre Jalbert

My **Cello Sonata** was commissioned by David Finckel and Wu Han, co-directors of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and the duo premiered the piece at the Aspen Music Festival in the summer of 2008. Having known and worked with Jeanne and Norman Fischer for years here at The Shepherd School of Music, and even before that (going back to the 1980s) at the Oberlin Conservatory, I knew I would love for them to perform the piece as well, so I relished the opportunity to write a sonata for cello and piano.

The work consists of four contrasting movements. The piece is anchored by the slow first movement, the longest and most substantial of the piece. The second, scherzo-like movement is a study in constant motion and shifting accents. The third movement features the cello as a solo instrument with the piano simply providing faint echoes of the cello's music. This movement grows in intensity and eventually accelerates directly into the last movement, which features frenetic syncopated dance-like rhythms shared and passed between piano and cello.

— Note by the composer

Pierre Jalbert is Professor of Music Theory and Composition at The Shepherd School of Music.

UPCOMING SYZYGY CONCERT

Thursday, November 4

PROGRAM

Anthony Brandt - **Nano Symphony** (2010)

Toshi Ichijanagi - **Trio Webster** (2008)

Augusta Read Thomas - **Traces** (2005)

Richard Lavenda - **What He Said** (2010)

(Richard Lavenda is a recipient of an Individual Artist Grant Award.

This grant is funded by the City of Houston through the Houston Arts Alliance.)

Performers include The Webster Trio; Benjamin Kamins, bassoon;

Desmond Hoebig, cello; Timothy Pitts, double bass;

David Kirk, tuba; and Makiko Hirata, piano.

8:00 p.m., Duncan Recital Hall

Free admission



RICE